

**Meeting Notes  
Tenant Work Group  
Tuesday, August 4, 2009  
6:30-8:30pm  
Executive Conference Room  
101 Monroe Street  
Rockville, MD 20850**

Work Group Members in Attendance: Matt Losak (Chair), Alice Wilkerson, Chuck Short, Dale Tibbets, Rick Nelson

Via Conference Call: Maureen Ross, Felicia Eberling, Parag Khandhar

Staff Participants: Ira Kowler, Patrice Cheatham

Agenda

- Review Committee 4 Report
- All committee updates
- Survey review
- Public comment
- Other business

Notes:

Matt Losak called the meeting to order at 6:45pm.

Maureen reviewed the report from Committee 4 on Seniors and Renters with Special Needs. The committee interviewed approximately 350 seniors to come to their findings and recommendations.

The Committee report noted that “most apartment buildings designated for seniors over the age of 65 are showing a vacancy rate of 10 to 15%. Dale Tibbets asked how the vacancy rate was calculated. Maureen replied that it is merely anecdotal and Matt said the language must be changed to sound less factual.

Matt reminded everyone that the work group was looking to protect all renters and expressed concern that separating seniors will create a class system it was looking to avoid. Maureen contended this system already exists, with senior housing complexes that have age minimums (65 and older). These complexes exist because seniors have no way of increasing their income. Matt and others disputed that claim. Chuck Short suggested integrating senior recommendations more smoothly into the larger report by adding a sentence stating that Committee 4 fully endorses rent stabilization recommendations from the other committees. Matt agreed with the Committee that Social Security can be an indicator for how rent increases should work in senior living but noted that other indicators should also be taken into account.

Dale wondered if the Committee recommendations include seniors living in non-senior housing. Maureen replied that it is only for seniors in senior housing because others can survive on more. Matt and Chuck disagreed with this assessment and suggested including all seniors. Chuck reiterated the importance of linking senior rent control policies with other rent control recommendations.

Dale noted that the report should emphasize the importance of stability for elderly renters. Matt suggested a line pointing out that moving is an overwhelming experience for many seniors and people with disabilities.

Parag Khandhar mentioned that Issue 3 has been added to the new Committee 3 report but wants to give people more time to read the revised report. He will discuss it further during the next meeting.

Alice Wilkerson walked the work group through the sample survey. Surveys were mailed on Thursday, accompanied with a cover letter (in both English and Spanish). Information on how to access the survey online is available in Spanish, Mandarin, Korean, and French.

Matt pointed out the survey is extremely large and easy to read. Alice states size of the font is appropriate for people to read. Seven people have replied by Friday (the first day they received the survey). Alice can see how many people replied and in what language. 5,000 surveys were mailed out and 1,000 replies are needed- 993 to go!

Matt included a press release issued today to note the mailing of the rent survey. He was hopeful it will get a pickup in at least the Gazette. Dale recommended we do another press release next week with a quotation from Matt emphasizing the importance of the survey and its potential influence on the work group's recommendation.

Matt debated the value of calling a radio station for outreach on the survey. Maybe county can put out a flyer at libraries, county service centers, etc. But then people might get concerned that they didn't get a survey and will want to fill one out. Matt noted that a great thing would be some sort of progress report on the number of replies.

Parag requested of pdf of the survey. Matt agreed to send out a copy, but emphasized that it should not be shown to anyone.

Rick- when people complain about not getting a survey, direct them to the website.

July 21 notes are approved.

No public comment.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.

**Upcoming Meeting:** August 18, 2009, 6:30pm